VALUE SYSTEMS
AND DECISION-MAKING STYLES
OF NEWSPAPER FRONT-LINE EDITORS

As American newspapers face declining readership, quality concerns, and changing technology and public tastes, newspaper decision-making style remains relatively unexamined. This study re-examines national survey data on U.S. editors charged with choosing, justifying, editing, and publishing the news. In a search for values that underlie decision-making styles, the study uncovers five style predictors: gender, experience, social values, journalistic values, and organizational values. Audience-related values were not significant predictors.

American newspapers face daunting obstacles. First, most continue to lose readers. Second, concern has mounted over dwindling newspaper competition. With newspaper investor demand for steady profit growth, newspapers must do more with less, often meaning reduced quality. In a vicious cycle, lowered quality encourages competition, which fuels the quest for short-term profits, which begets reduced quality.

But Americans’ news tastes have changed, and so has their attitude toward public affairs news. Readers generally have tepid experiences with newspapers: News is less of “something to talk about”; an industry study showed newspaper managers think readers have far more positive experiences than readers actually did, suggesting newspapers have not risen to the occasion.

The current study explores one possible reason why newspapers have not responded more quickly. Obviously, to attract more readers or develop more attractive vehicles, newspaper content will have to appeal more to readers’ tastes or become more reader-friendly in presentation. Thus, newsroom managers may have to re-think their decision-making process.

Given newsrooms’ daily schedules, decision making remains vital, but routines requiring sound decision making also hinder its development. Newsroom personnel lack time to think and discuss decisions, and deadlines decrease chances for pertinent thought and dialogue. Because strategy and values frame an organization’s purpose, linking business strategy and employee values becomes important. The speed

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of change, especially in markets and technology, requires managers to clarify their values for organizational survival. If newspapers use unclarified values in strategy, they risk losing the wisdom, dedication, and ingenuity of employees.  

This study examines how front-line editors approach decision making. It explores their decision-making styles and those styles’ antecedents through analysis of data from a national survey of U.S. editors.  

**Literature Review**

**Personal Value Theory.** Since the 1930s, researchers have studied personal values’ behavioral impact, offering definitions of values ranging from “a conception...(influencing) the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action,” to “global beliefs...that underlie attitudinal processes”—the illustrative behavior of which manifests one’s basic values. Scholars mostly see personal values as beliefs underlying attitudes—the application of a value—and generally argue that values predict behavior.  

Blau noted that individuals behave within cultures according to prevailing values, and found that such values had structural effects, i.e., social controls on behavior independent of what the individual believes. In some cases, an individual’s values had a similar-yet-independent impact as group values do on behavior. But Rokeach argued that single, lone values inadequately predict behavior (especially as priorities change).

A 1998 literature summary noted that scholars have largely assumed that values or value congruence would explain other variables (e.g., turnover), although many such studies do not address values’ roles alone. So no consensus exists as to which values organizations most respect.

Later research “strongly” corroborates effects of personal values in decisions. How much a person—especially a leader—practices a behavioral style seems related to how he or she assesses decisions. Several studies suggest that leaders affect subordinates’ self-identity and behavior, leading naturally to a focus on decision making.  

**Decision Making.** Dewey described a five-stage, problem-solving process: a problem, its context, alternative solutions, their implications, and making a decision. Each stage, particularly the last, is affected by the problem’s nature, the organizational context, human cognitive limits, and the decision maker’s personality characteristics (including values). For example, Heath claimed that individual decision making is complex, depending on—among other things—adjusting “value priorities” and how they mediate between social drives and individual decisions: “Values form part of the assessment matrix which individuals use to define and evaluate their surroundings. (V)alues, when structured into systems, serve as dynamic definitional and evaluative constructs.” Scholars in this area also examine decision-making style, once seen as a person’s “characteristic mode of perceiving and responding to decision-making tasks” and recently defined as a “learned habitual response pattern exhibited....when confronted with a decision situation.”  

With
emerging multinational firms, scholars began focusing on the magnitude of managerial behavior and values. According to Fisher:

... (I)t may be helpful to separate the various aspects of the management role into two categories: things that are observable, such as behaviors and styles and things that are not observable, such as the individual’s values, assumptions, paradigms and vision. These unobservable things are examples of the core beliefs of the manager... What appears to be confusing about management behaviors can often be clarified by understanding what is in the invisible box.

**Values and Decision Making.** Since the 1980s, scholars have tried to clarify this relationship. Earlier inquiries generally built on the notion that background factors—organizational and personal—influenced how managers view decision-making situations. This approach paralleled journalistic gatekeeping studies tracking news production phases; such studies began describing editor exchanges, and a few examined news values that editors used. Only one study was found that linked personal values to decisions, i.e., story selection processes. In analyzing editors’ front-page conferences, Reisner found that while the editors strategically included news values in discussions, they also used personal ideology.

While scholars traditionally suggested such “news values”—e.g., prominence, human interest, conflict, novelty, timeliness, and proximity—enter into editors’ decision making, Shoemaker and Reese said news values stem “largely from the limited attention and interest of the audience,” implying that editors incorporate such values because they predict an audience’s tastes, and that organizational routines have much stronger roles in decision making. Too, news values can vary: Gade’s national reporter and editor survey noted editors “re-examining their news values,” prompting reporters to “accept...redefined news values...”. So news values essentially belong among professional—not personal—values, unconnected to decision-making styles.

But a 2002 study of retail chain store managers did connect personal values to styles. Based on the argument that different values underlie leadership functions, the study found that managers’ personal values significantly related to leadership styles. A year later, a public managers personal values survey confirmed that finding: twelve of fourteen value sets significantly related to particular decision-making styles. Most notably, several studies built on Scott and Bruce’s general decision-making styles (GDMS) attracted social psychologists’ attention. Scott and Bruce identified five styles: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous. These styles, which are central to the present study, have been independently validated and empirically tested in various samples. For example, one study found that rational, dependent, and avoidant decision-making styles could be predicted by self-esteem and action control. So decision-making style reflected individual habits and involved self-evaluation and self-regulation.
Subsequent studies provided support but varied in approach. For example, a Canadian and Irish line manager survey found “capability values”—being self-reliant and competent and at self-peace, and having self-respect—predicted managers’ emphasis on health- and safety-related decisions.42 While providing evidence that managers use personal values in making decisions, the study did not use the Scott-and-Bruce inventory. Another study43 of Irish managers—a survey-interview of those in the non-profit sector—indicated a “consensual, consultative and inclusive”44 style linked with people-oriented values, but did not address decision-making styles per se.

Scholars also have examined decision making within a social responsibility and ethical frame, a natural extension because of management’s profit orientation. Discussion ranged from the idea of maximizing profits as the consummate socially responsible act45 to the notion that different situations demand different ethical conduct.46 Studies attempting to incorporate decision-making styles here have varied in focus, from assertions that “universal” values transcend nations and styles, to proposals that several styles can be used, depending on the manager’s moral development and altruism.47

This debate also occurs in journalism, where journalists’ professionalism attracts special attention. Beginning with contentions that journalistic consensus on news values, news’ moral intent, and its altruistic aspirations48 exempt journalism from relativism, scholars have divided their focus between journalists and their editors where it concerns decision making. For example, some49 suggested employers have co-opted “professionalism” to persuade rank-and-file journalists to change the nature of their jobs. Others50 contend that situations—fraught with tensions between professional values and organizational directives—still determine the rank-and-file’s ethical framework: A survey of newspaper reporters found that context and level of professional confidence strongly influenced ethical decisions, particularly concerning “the journalism-business dialectic.”51

Plaisance and Skewes52 discovered a modest-but-adversarial relationship in U.S. newspaper journalists’ ranked values and their perceived journalistic role priorities. Their study found that values and role perceptions interact to shape behavior.53 Attempting to end scholarly speculation about journalists’ values, the study documented the need for additional research on values in “the various ‘environments’ in which particular values and role conceptions are formed.”54 Plaisance’s subsequent examination of one college’s journalism ethics students55 also showed that an ethics course could impact student value systems, with the course’s added discussion of corporatism apparently influencing declines in idealism and relativism. Both studies suggest that increasing corporate consolidation may influence values of rank-and-file journalists.

**Demographics.** Demographics may also affect decision making, albeit inconsistently. Scholars speculate that gender, for one, enters the equation. For example, a study of thousands of U.S. upper- and middle-level managers showed that traditional gender role stereotypes typically surrounding issues on “collaboration and nurturance versus power and...
control” could not be substantiated and that male managers’ competitiveness had decreased over the time of the study. This analysis, as well as an examination of Chinese managers, contradicted an earlier decision-making style study.

The earlier study, the first to examine the link among gender, values, and managerial style, probed the relationship between values and six managerial styles among 130 male and 125 female managers in the southeastern United States. Although men’s overall mean authoritarian style scores significantly exceeded those for women, the difference disappeared when holding education constant. But significant gender differences in values existed. Degreed women gave significantly higher rankings for harmony and self-respect values than did degree men. Degreed women also exhibited significantly higher rankings for capable, independent, and responsible values and a significantly lower ranking on the courageous value. Non-degreed women gave significantly higher rankings than did comparable men for some values (cheerful, forgiving, helpful, honest, and loving) and significantly lower rankings for others (ambitious, intellectual, and logical). Thus instrumental values—those helping achieve certain ends—clearly link with managerial styles but in different ways by gender.

Other demographic elements also are a factor. Coleman found that race of the people in ethical dilemmas affected ethical reasoning. Student journalists, when asked to decide if photographs raising ethical questions should be published when they knew a photographed subject was white, tended to score higher on an ethical reasoning test than those scoring photographs depicting an African American subject. Another study showed education level modestly determined who became central in team advice, friendship, and an organization’s adversarial networks. An Indian study of values hypothesized that age would not affect management practices and that young managers, despite more stress, would act according to senior managers’ expectations. The results did not support that hypothesis, along with the supposition that managers’ values would have no impact on management practices. But the study did show, certeris paribus, a significant difference between young and old managers’ management values. Despite institutional pressure to defuse the effect of the new managerial values on managerial practices, young managers’ values strongly impacted managerial practices. Both groups showed managers’ values largely mediated their behavior. Plaisance and Skews found some relationships between age and years as a journalist and values.

More recently, a survey of Chinese employees’ response to various leadership styles found that employees viewing themselves in terms of group membership more positively associated transformational leadership styles with work-related attitudes/outcomes, so an individual’s work groups influenced how that person viewed style.

By examining the thought processes of newspapers’ mid-level editors—those “front-line” editors directly supervising others while reporting to the managing editor—this study seeks to understand what may
### TABLE 1

**Factor Analysis of Editors’ Value Systems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
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<td>Peers</td>
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<td>Routine</td>
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<td>.084</td>
<td>.037</td>
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<td>Tradition</td>
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<td>.099</td>
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<td>Group Conflict</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.097</td>
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<td>Politics</td>
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<td>.021</td>
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<td>.103</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Norms</td>
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<td>-.003</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.073</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Level</td>
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<td>.033</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>.132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.145</td>
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<td>Pride</td>
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<td>Control</td>
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<td>.332</td>
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<td>Timeliness</td>
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<td>Deadline</td>
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<td>Impact</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.71</td>
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Note: N=341.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 10 iterations.
drive newsroom decisions. The analysis closest to the present study was a fall 2005 national survey of U.S. newspaper mid-level editors. To develop measures of value systems the editors may have in deciding, an interactive, Web-based Q-sort questionnaire was provided for editors to rate and rank 48 value items on a 7-point scale. Specifically, respondents were presented an interactive list of value items and asked, “When making decisions, are the following items influential to you?” When an item was rated, the list re-ranked itself so respondents knew where they positioned the item relative to other items. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values (.846) and Barlett’s sphericity tests \( (p < .001) \) showed the data suitable for factoring. Using principal component analysis and oblique rotation, four value systems were identified (social, journalistic, organizational, and audience) after twelve items were dropped because three loaded greater than .40 across more than one factor and nine failed to load above .40 on any factor. Table 1 is reproduced to show the items comprising the resulting four factors, their eigenvalues, and percentages of explained variance.

That study also revealed that editors vary—by demographic subgroup—in values emphasized; no attempt was made to control those influences or connect them to decision-making styles. Instead of treating demographics as independent variables and the four value systems as dependent variables, the present study attempts to test the effects of editors’ value systems on decision making, while also taking demographic and job-related effects into account.

Numerous instruments assess decision-making styles. Among them, the General Decision-Making Style (GDMS) measure, reviewed earlier, offers better scales with cross-sample validity. Based on a multi-stage, four-sample study, Scott and Bruce proposed five decision-making styles that are neither context- nor problem-specific. A rational style is deliberate and logical; an intuitive style relies on internal hunches; a dependent style projects responsibility for decisions onto others; an avoidant style attempts to avoid decision making; and a spontaneous style attempts to make decisions quickly. Scott and Bruce then used exploratory factor analysis on military officers, graduate students, undergraduate students, and engineers and produced scale reliabilities ranging from .68 to .94. Later, Loo and Spicer and Sadler-Smith used confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses to re-examine Scott and Bruce’s five-factor structure and found it appropriate for classifying individual decision-making styles.

In the absence of previous direct research on which to build relationships between the four value systems developed by the authors and Scott and Bruce’s five decision-making styles, research hypotheses would be premature. Instead, the objective is to investigate the proposition that editors’ value systems are identifiably related to decision-making style, so:

**RQ1:** To what degree do the four value systems predict newspaper editors’ decision-making styles, after controlling for demographic and job-related effects?
RQ2: What are the relationships between decision-making styles and demographics, job-related variables, and value systems?

RQ3: Which value systems have a greater effect on each decision-making style, after controlling for demographic and job-related effects?

**Methods**

**Data Collection.** This study is based on the 2005 national Web-based survey alluded to earlier. A Web-based survey model was chosen mainly because of the use of an interactive Q-sort technique. The 2004 Bacon’s Newspaper Directory identified 1,192 U.S. dailies. To survey a variety of front-line editors from different departments within a newspaper, up to five editors listed as either the head or assistant to the head of a newsroom department from each newspaper were selected. With a target return of 400 and a target response rate of 20% (because the average response rate for a management survey is around 15% to 22%), a stratified random sample of 400 daily newspapers was compiled, yielding 1,802 e-mails on the sampling list. The unit of analysis was the front-line editor; papers ranged from USA TODAY and the New York Times to the smallest one with only a circulation of 6,000. Each e-mail contained a URL address that the respondent could go to in order to participate. Two waves of e-mails were sent in March and August 2005. The final e-mail count was 1,677 because of “bounce-backs.”

**Dependent Measures.** Decision-making styles were operationalized via Scott and Bruce’s GDMS measure, which has 25 items, or 5 items for each decision-making style: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous. The Appendix shows the 25 statements, modified by the authors. For example, a rational style posed statements such as “I usually double-check my information sources”; an intuitive style posed statements such as “I usually trust my inner feelings”; a dependent style posed statements such as “if I have the support of others, it is easier for me to make important decisions”; an avoidant style posed statements such as “I usually put off making many decisions because thinking about them makes me uneasy”; and a spontaneous style posed statements such as “I usually make quick decisions.” Respondents were asked to rate the 25 items on a Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree” to “5=strongly agree.”

**Control Variables.** For a more stringent test of the relationship of value systems to decision-making styles, a number of control variables were measured. Key demographics—gender, ethnicity, ideology, age, and education level—were identified. Respondents also were asked to report their professional experience and current position and to classify their newspaper’s circulation and staff’s size. In order to perform multivariate analyses, most choices were indicated on either dichotomous or ordinal scales. For example, gender and race are dichotomous, whereas education levels range from “1 = high school incomplete” to “5 = postgraduate training”; ideology from “1 = very conservative” to “5 = very...
liberal”; experience from “1 = 5 years or less” to “7 = 31 years or more”; circulation size from “1 = under 50,000” to “4 = over 250,000”; staff size from “1 = under 50” to “4 = over 250.”

Data Analysis. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to predict each decision-making style (i.e., rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous). The regression allowed determination of whether value systems make a significant contribution to predicting decision-making styles beyond the contribution of demographic- and job-related predictors. The data were first tested for assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, outliers, and multicollinearity.76 All assumptions were met except for the violation of normality in three variables: organizational value system, audience value system, and rational decision-making style. Transformations of the variables did not improve the regression models substantially, so variables were used without transformation. To answer the research questions, the predictors were entered in blocks with a statistical test to indicate the significance of each. Respondent demographics were entered, then job-related variables (e.g., experience, position), and finally likelihood of possessing certain value system(s). This procedure removed the variance accounted for by demographic and job-related variables, found by previous studies to affect individual values on decision making.77

Survey Profile. Some 341 surveys of 1,677 valid deliveries were completed for a 20.3% response rate. Given the average management survey response rates range from 15% to 22%,78 the return rate was not desirable but acceptable. Because 400 newspapers were randomly sampled rather than the 1,677 editors from our population parameter, an organizational response rate was calculated. The 341 editors were from 209 newspapers, yielding an organizational response rate of 52%, which provided an alternative indicator of the sample’s ability to represent the population. Most respondents (84%) were assistant/deputy managing editors, section editors, and assistant section editors, while the remainder held higher positions such as managing editors, editors, and publishers (they were the decision makers in small newspapers). The respondents’ demographic makeup did not deviate dramatically from the 2005 American Society of Newspaper Editors’ Newsroom Employment Census79 under the job category of supervisors. Women made up 34% in this study, compared with 35% in the census; whites made up 94% of the respondents, while the census constituted 89% whites.

Variable Profile. Table 2 presents descriptive and reliability statistics (Cronbach’s alpha) for the four value systems and five GDMS scales. In general, the respondents ranked the journalistic values as most important when making decisions; on a scale ranging from -3 to +3, the mean score for journalistic values was 2.4. Conversely, the social values were reported as relatively least important; the mean score for social values is .01, representing neither positive nor negative impact on

Results
In terms of dispersion, journalistic values were least varied among respondents (sd = .51), whereas social values were most varied (sd = .78); i.e., there was more consensus on journalistic values’ importance and less on social values. With regard to decision-making styles, the respondents, on a scale of 1 to 5, were more likely to adopt rational, intuitive, dependent, and spontaneous decision-making styles, but less likely to behave in an avoidant style when compared to the scale’s midpoint (2.5).

To verify that all items were adequate to compose reliable scales, internal reliabilities were checked (see Table 2). Since Cronbach’s alpha ideally should exceed .70, all scales are adequate except the dependent scale (.57), too low to consider reliable with the sample. Although scale developers Scott and Bruce acquired an average alpha of .79 for the dependent style with their four samples, subsequent studies had problems obtaining that level (e.g., $\alpha = .62^{80}; \alpha = .70^{81}$). As a result, the dependent decision-making style was dropped from further analyses.

**Research Questions.** RQ1 examined to what degree the four value systems predict newspaper editors’ decision-making styles, after controlling for demographic and job-related effects. Four hierarchical regression analyses were performed. Each regression model treated one of the four styles as the dependent variable, the four value systems as predictor variables, and the demographic and job-related factors as control variables. In Table 3, the total $R^2$ shows all four models significant at the .001 level. The model accounting for 17% of variance in avoidant style performed best ($F_{[13,331]} = 4.976, p = .000$). Specifically, being male, believing in social values, and disbelieving journalistic and organizational values all significantly associated with an avoidant style. The amount of incremental $R^2$ in Block 3, consistently accounting for 9% or 10% of vari-
ance in decision-making styles, also was significant at the .001 level for the four models. That is, although the five value systems uniquely contribute only 9% to 10% variance in each decision-making style, we are 99.9% confident that the contribution is real in the inferred population. Therefore, this suggests that respondents’ value systems as a whole significantly affect their decision-making styles, after removing the effects of demographic and job-related variables. Note that the demographic block was significantly related to avoidant style ($p < .01$), and the job-related block was influential only for spontaneous style ($p < .05$).

**RQ2** asked for the relationships between decision-making styles and demographics, job-related variables, and value systems. Regarding individual relationships, five significant predictors were found: gender, experience, social value system, journalistic value system, and organizational value system. First, gender predicted spontaneous ($β = .15, p < .01$) and avoidant ($β = .12, p < .05$) decision styles. Specifically, male respondents tended toward more spontaneous and more avoidant decision styles. Second, less-experienced respondents tended toward
more intuitive ($\beta = -0.23$, $p < 0.05$) and more spontaneous ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$) decision styles. Third, social values had a positive impact on intuitive ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), spontaneous ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), and avoidant ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$) decision styles. Fourth, respondents ranking journalistic values higher were more likely to say they made rational decisions ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$) and were less likely to avoid decision making ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, organizational values positively related to rational decision style ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$) and negatively related to avoidant decision style ($\beta = -0.20$, $p < 0.01$). In sum, demographics and job-related variables were not as strong predictors of decision-making styles as value systems because only two variables—gender and experience—out of nine had significant relationships with some styles.

RQ3 investigated which value systems have greater effect on each decision-making style, after controlling for demographic and job-related effects. Figure 1 graphically displays the results in Block 3 of Table 3. The reported standardized betas allow comparing the relative importance of the four value systems on each decision style. A rational decision-making style was influenced most by organizational and journalistic value systems. Specifically, respondents’ rational style resulted from their belief in journalistic values such as ethics, objectivity, fairness, and accuracy, and/or organizational values such as motivation, company goals, planning, and satisfaction (as values shown in Table 1). An intuitive and spontaneous decision-making style was affected most by social value system, which includes belief in peers, routine, personal ties,
tradition, and group conflicts (as values shown in Table 1). Lastly, an avoidant decision-making style was positively influenced by social value system and/or negatively influenced by journalistic and organizational value systems.

The study demonstrates value systems used in the decision-making styles of newspaper front-line editors. It also links value systems and decision-making styles while accounting for demographic and job-related effects. Three findings merit notice.

First, as to whether a relationship exists between front-line editors’ value systems and their decision-making styles, results suggest an unqualified “yes.” The overall model indicates a definite-but-small relationship. The change statistics between value systems and each decision style survived, even after controlling demographic and job-related variables. Moreover, editors’ value systems accounted for 9% to 10% of variance in each decision style, suggesting a small-but-stable influence across styles. These influences are not surprising because previous findings show personal value systems related to job satisfaction, motivation, leadership styles, and both individual and organizational performance.82

Second, five significant decision-making style predictors were found: social value system, journalistic value system, organizational value system, gender, and experience. Among these systems, the editors’ social value system predicted intuitive, spontaneous, and avoidant styles, and journalistic and organizational value systems functioned similarly in predicting rational and avoidant styles. The results confirm Scott and Bruce’s findings that “individuals do not rely on a single decision-making style...(but combine) decision-making styles in making important decisions.”83 For instance, an editor rated high in social values also was more likely to rate high in intuitive, spontaneous, and avoidant decision making, suggesting that an editor using social values tends to make intuitive, spontaneous decisions or to avoid making decisions.

Among control variables, final betas show that gender predicted spontaneous and avoidant styles; and experience predicted intuitive and spontaneous styles. Similar to an earlier 2003 finding of a counter-stereotypical pattern,84 the sample’s male editors more significantly tended toward more spontaneous and more avoidant decision-making styles. Contrary to earlier studies,85 however, age and ideology had no significant impact on decision styles; instead, experience had some influence. This is partly understandable because previous studies did not control experience when examining age’s effect, so it might actually come from its imperfectly related measure, experience. Future research should consider age and experience in one model to clarify how editors form decision styles.

Finally, journalistic and organizational values significantly affected rational decision making; social values influenced intuitive and spontaneous decision making; and avoidant decision making was pos-

Discussion
itively influenced by social values but negatively influenced by journalistic and organizational values. To understand the latter finding, consider that rational decision making assumes “accurate information...is acquired and the individual’s self appraisal is realistic,”86 making it reasonable to expect rational decision making as influenced by journalistic and organizational values, which require deliberate and logical reasoning. Too, intuitive and spontaneous decision styles were previously positively correlated87 and characterized as trying to present feelings and an emotional self-awareness as the basis for decision making.88 So editors rating highly on intuitive or spontaneous decision making may logically believe in social values because many such values are culture- or people-based. This does not mean rational decision making is superior to intuitive decision making, even in a newsroom. Several studies found rational decision making limits boundaries on problem formulation, whereas intuitive decision making is more open to alternatives and thus more innovative.89 Finally, avoidant decision-making implies non-action in approaching problems; such editors use social values rather than journalistic and organizational values and—especially if intimidated by deadline and other pressures—could give procrastination or conflicting feelings about the newsroom (versus upper management dictates) priority over decision making. These editors may have little confidence in approaching problems when they strongly uphold one system (i.e., the social value system) and simultaneously strongly subvert other systems (i.e., journalistic and organizational value systems).

Since the dependent style was dropped in mid-analysis, future studies may want to modify the Scott and Bruce90 items to increase the scale reliability. Other aspects also warrant caution: the less-than-desirable response rate; the Web-based survey mode; the survey’s exploratory nature; and/or the results’ self-reported quality. A survey also excludes chances for observation or other methods confirming or dispelling the results. This study’s sampling method also likely under-represents certain demographic groups while over-representing those with Internet access. Finally, data from the respondents’ subordinates wasn’t available and would provide more insight.

But the study suggests the newspaper industry still can navigate through the change-or-die crossroads. The study allows editors to reveal more precisely what explains decision-making styles. Individuals may believe in more than one value system and use several decision-making styles, but this study links the two. As Fisher91 said, if behaviors and styles are observable, this study’s findings help news organizations to understand the invisible box’s contents.

The study also shows certain values and demographic factors predict certain decision-making styles. Such knowledge, with the realization that gender and experience also predict certain styles, could help determine hiring, training, or restructuring. Editors may want to appeal to these values in framing change initiatives. They also may find it useful—but depressing in the market-driven management era—to know that audience-related values have no predictive power in shaping decision-
making styles. Front-line editors-to-be would be helped by understanding their preferred style(s) and how to use them effectively.

Appendix and Notes follow.
## APPENDIX

*Modified Items from Scott and Bruce’s General Decision-making Style Instrument*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>I usually double-check my information sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually have the right facts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually make decisions in a logical and systematic way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My decision making usually requires careful thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually consider various options in terms of a specific goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>I rely upon my instincts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually tend to rely on my intuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I generally make decisions that feel right to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is more important for me to feel the decision is right than to have a rational reason for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually trust my inner feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>I often need the assistance of other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I rarely make important decisions without consulting other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I have the support of others, it is easier for me to make important decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually use the advice of other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I like to have someone to steer me in the right direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>I usually avoid making important decisions until the pressure is on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I postpone decision making whenever possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I often procrastinate when it comes to making important decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I generally make important decisions at the last minute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually put off making many decisions because thinking about them makes me uneasy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td>I generally make snap decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I often make decisions on the spur of the moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually make quick decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I often make impulsive decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I usually do what seems natural at the moment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES


7. Williams, “Strategic Planning and Organizational Values: Links to Alignment.”


44. Connolly, “Management Style in the Non-Profit Sector in Ireland,” 146.

45. For example, see Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits,” the *New York Times*, September 13, 1970, pp. 32+.


60. Chusmir, Ko bert, and Mills, “Male-Female Differences in the Association of Managerial Style and Personal Values.”


64. Mellahi and Guermat, “Does Age Matter? An Empirical Examination of The Effect of Age on Managerial Values and Practices in India.” The authors noted the Indian context, and that differences within countries are generally overshadowed by national cultures’ effect.


67. George Sylvie and Jing-rong Sonia Huang, “Decision-Making by Newspaper Editors: Understanding Values and Change” (paper presented to Innovation and Media: Managing Changes in Technology, Products,


74. Stratified random sampling reduces the sampling errors for the stratifying variable. Two steps were involved in the sampling. First, the 2004 Bacon’s Newspaper Directory was used to provide an alphabetical list of daily newspapers in the country. Then, in order to create a stratified sample, each newspaper’s circulation was identified using circulation averages—as compiled by the Audit Bureau of Circulations—for the six months ending September 30, 2004. Second, the alphabetical list and the circulation list were then combined and sorted by circulation on a spreadsheet. A column representing cumulated circulation was created in order to proportionately weight the random selection so that larger newspapers would be over-sampled (such organizations tend to have more departmental infrastructure, thus providing a larger pool of editors from which to select and helping to assure variation in responses).

75. Hair et al., Multivariate Data Analysis.

76. Hair et al., Multivariate Data Analysis.


80. Robert Loo, “A Psychometric Evaluation of the General Decision-

81. Thunholm, “Decision-Making Style: Habit, Style or Both?”


83. Scott and Bruce, “Decision-Making Style: The Development and Assessment of a New Measure,” 829.

84. Robinson and Lipman-Blumen, “Leadership Behavior of Male and Female Managers.”


87. Spicer and Sadler-Smith, “An Examination of the General Decision Making Style Questionnaire in Two UK Samples.”


90. Scott and Bruce, “Decision-Making Style: The Development and Assessment of a New Measure.”